Bronze no Tenshi
Volume 4 Chapter 14

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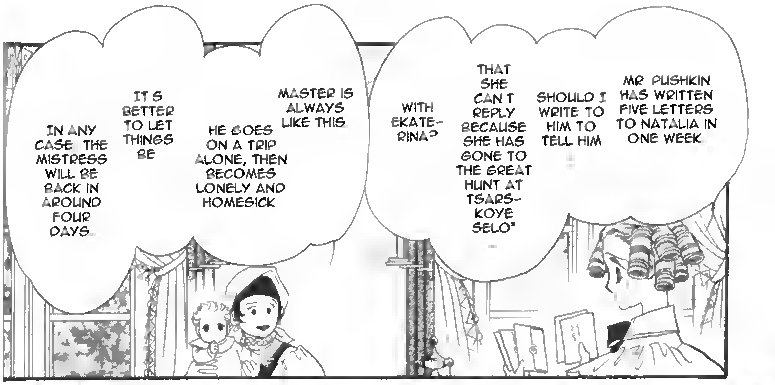
Vol. 14 A Beautiful Trophy

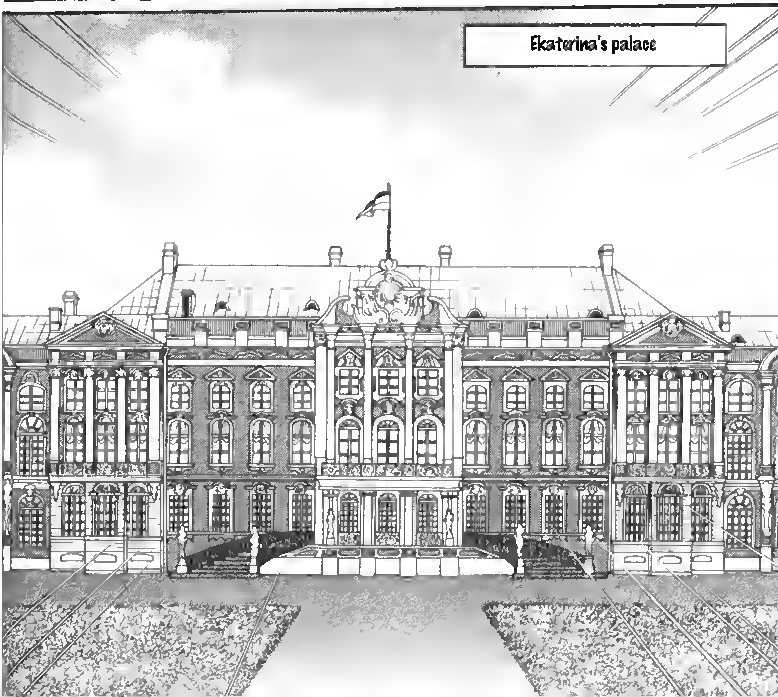
Yesterday, I saw a wolf.
Perhaps it's the same wolf
I like its eyes.
I feel as though we are similar.
It's the second time I have during this week in Beltine.

Truly, I wonder why I chose not to bring you
I wish I could have shown them to you
That's what I thought when I first saw them
Although wolves are usually considered villains I find those that travel with their young to be rather charming
I suppose autumn has always been an especial season for my creativity, and so I thought I would require some solitude
I take to bed at nine in the evening, and I rise at seven in the morning I spend every day in taking walks. I cannot stop thinking about you
My angelic wife,
Should I not receive at least a line from you, I shall grow wild with my imaginings of what might have gone
Please, write me a letter as soon as you may and tell me how our home and children are faring
Best regards to Coco and Adi *

*EKATERINA AND ALEXANDRA'S PETNAMES

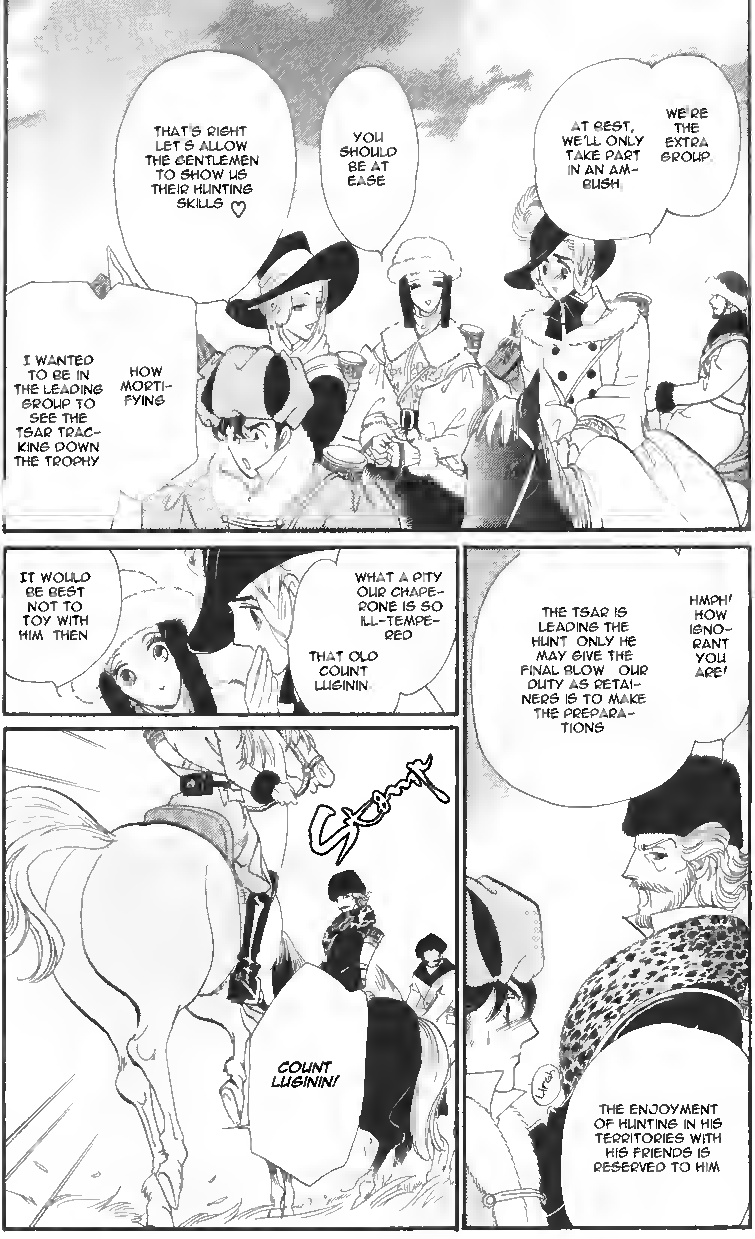
*FORMER RESIDENCE OF THE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL FAMILY.


IN ANY CASE THE MISTRESS WILL BE BACK IN AROUND FOUR DAYS.
IT'S BETTER TO LET THINGS BE
HE GOES ON A TRIP ALONE, THEN BECOMES LONELY AND HOMESICK
MASTER IS ALWAYS LIKE THIS
WITH EKATERINA?
THAT SHE CAN'T REPLY BECAUSE SHE HAS GONE TO THE GREAT HUNT AT TSARSKOYE SELO*
SHOULD I WRITE TO HIM TO TELL HIM
MR. PUSHKIN HAS WRITTEN FIVE LETTERS TO NATALIA IN ONE WEEK



First day of the hunt
YOUR MAJESTY, IT WAS REPORTED THAT A BLACK WOLF WAS SEEN AT THE WEST OAK FOREST
DO YOU THINK IT'S PERHAPS THAT WOLF?
THE WOLF WE CAPTURED THREE YEARS AGO AND SET FREE?
WE CAN CAPTURE IT ONCE AGAIN
IF IT HAS GROWN WISER, THE CHASE WILL ONLY BE MORE EXHILARATING
THIS YEAR, LET'S TRACK IT DOWN AND KILL IT, YOUR MAJESTY!
WE ARE TO INSPECT THE FORMATION OF THE HUNTING PARTIES
COLLECT THE HUNTERS, PERSONS IN CHARGE OF HOUNDS, AND BEATERS!
ADVANCE PARTY, ENTER THE COACHES!
THEY PREPARED FIFTY COACHES FOR WIVES
I CAN'T GET ON!
STUFF SIX AT A TIME IN EACH COACH!
RATHER THAN GO TO THE HUNTING GROUND,
I PREFER TO WAIT FOR HIS MAJESTY TO RETURN HERE AT LEISURE.
I'M A RATHER UNENERGETIC SORT OF WOMAN
AND SO THE IDEA OF RUNNING AFTER THE TROPHY FOR SO MANY DAYS
SOUNDS SIMPLY AWFUL TO ME

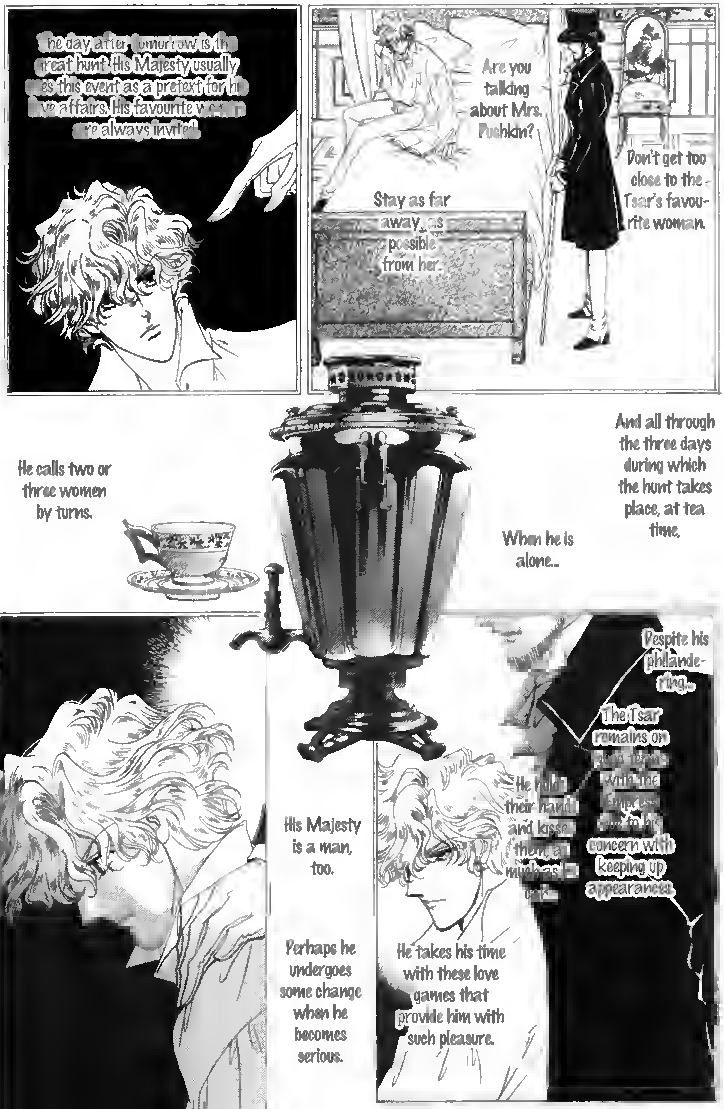
Yeah
Yeah
Yeah
Yeah


WE'RE THE EXTRA GROUP
AT BEST, WE'LL ONLY TAKE PART IN AN AMBUSH
YOU SHOULD BE AT EASE
THAT'S RIGHT LET'S ALLOW THE GENTLEMEN TO SHOW US THEIR HUNTING SKILLS ♡
HOW MORTIFYING
I WANTED TO BE IN THE LEADING GROUP TO SEE THE TSAR TRACKING DOWN THE TROPHY
HMPH! HOW IGNORANT YOU ARE!
THE TSAR IS LEADING THE HUNT. ONLY HE MAY GIVE THE FINAL BLOW. OUR DUTY AS RETAINERS IS TO MAKE THE PREPARATIONS
Lirei
THE ENJOYMENT OF HUNTING IN HIS TERRITORIES WITH HIS FRIENDS IS RESERVED TO HIM
WHAT A PITY OUR CHAPERONE IS SO ILL-TEMPERED
THAT OLD COUNT LUGININ
IT WOULD BE BEST NOT TO TOY WITH HIM THEN
Count
COUNT LUGININ!

I M HERE TO GIVE YOU A MESSAGE
YOUR GROUP IS ASKED TO TAKE POSITIONS FROM THE SOUTHERN WHEAT FIELDS TO THE BROOK
LET'S GO!
LET S RIDE HALF OF THE WAY AS A GROUP
COME HERE, EVERY-BODY!
UNDERS-TOOD!
Gee up!
BARON D'ANTHES!

MRS PUSHKIN

I'll be going on a trip for around three months. During my absence, I would like you to make me a promise.
You must be careful, for the sake of your future.
Baron D'Anthes.


The day after tomorrow is the great hunt. His Majesty usually uses this event as a pretext for his love affairs. His favourite women are always invited.
Are you talking about Mrs. Pushkin?
Don't get too close to the Tsar's favourite woman.
Stay as far away as possible from her.
He calls two or three women by turns.
When he is alone...
And all through the three days during which the hunt takes place, at tea time.
His Majesty is a man, too.
Perhaps he undergoes some change when he becomes serious.
He takes his time with these love games that provide him with such pleasure.
Despite his philandering...
The Tsar remains on
concern with keeping up appearances.

I'm going on this trip for your sake.
I'm to meet your father and finalise the details of your adoption.
You're truly determined to become my son, aren't you?
Yes.
I leave the matter in your hands.
Then...
I sincerely hope that you will take care.

ENJOYING A GOOD CONVERSATION IS PART OF THE NECESSARY ETIQUETTE OF SOCIAL LIFE
AS IF I WOULD CONCERN MYSELF WITH SUCH THINGS!
I DIDN'T THINK YOU WOULD COME TO THE HUNT
YOU MANAGE THE HORSE WONDERFULLY
DID YOU RECEIVE AN INVITATION FROM THE TSAR?
I'M STILL NOT USED TO THE HORSE I'M ALWAYS PESTERING NATALIA TO COME WITH ME
RIGHT, NATALIA?
ARE THESE WOMEN NICHOLAS'S TEA FRIENDS' FOR THIS YEAR?
I'M CLUMSY AT HORSE-RIDING TO THE POINT OF MAKING A FOOL OF MYSELF,
BUT I WANTED TO HAVE A CLOSER VIEW OF THE HUNT
MRS PUSHKIN IS VERY SKILLFUL AT HANDLING A HORSE
SHE'S MY CURRENT FAVOURITE LADY
I'M TO GUIDE YOU TO THE CASTLE AT WHICH YOU'LL BE STAYING TONIGHT
I'LL COME AGAIN THIS EVENING
NATALIA NIKOLAEVNA DOESN'T BEHAVE FORMALLY SHE'S NATURAL, AND I ADMIRE THAT

WHAT? IN THIS SEASON?
IT'S A SWAN
YOUR MAJES-TY?
WHAT IS IT? A TROPHY?
WHEN HE COMES NEAR ME
MY CHEST ACHES
IN FRONT OF EKATERINA, I ONLY SPEAK NONSENSE
I CANNOT COMPOSE MY RE-PLIES
I THINK OF IT UNCEA-SINGLY...
AND I CANNOT REPLY TO MY HUSBAND'S LETTERS
I'M SO WEARY OF IT ALL...
I WANT THINGS TO BE AS THEY WERE

How frightening.
RELEASE THE BORZOIS AND BEAGLES TO SEARCH FOR IT!
RUN AFTER IT!
ALL WE'VE CAUGHT TODAY ARE SOME RABBITS AND DEER.
Second day of the hunt
THERE HAS BEEN A REPORT OF A BLACK WOLF BEING SEEN AMONG THE MOUNTAINS

"SO-CALLED "RUSSIAN WOLFHOUNDS" BRED FOR THE HUNT THAT WERE ONCE EXCLUSIVE TO THE IMPERIAL FAMILY.

BARON D'ANTHES.
THE IDEA OF CANCELLING THE HUNT FOR A LITTLE RAIN IS COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE.
IT'S AN ORDER FROM ABOVE
WE HAVE TO LEAVE THE WOMEN AT THE INN

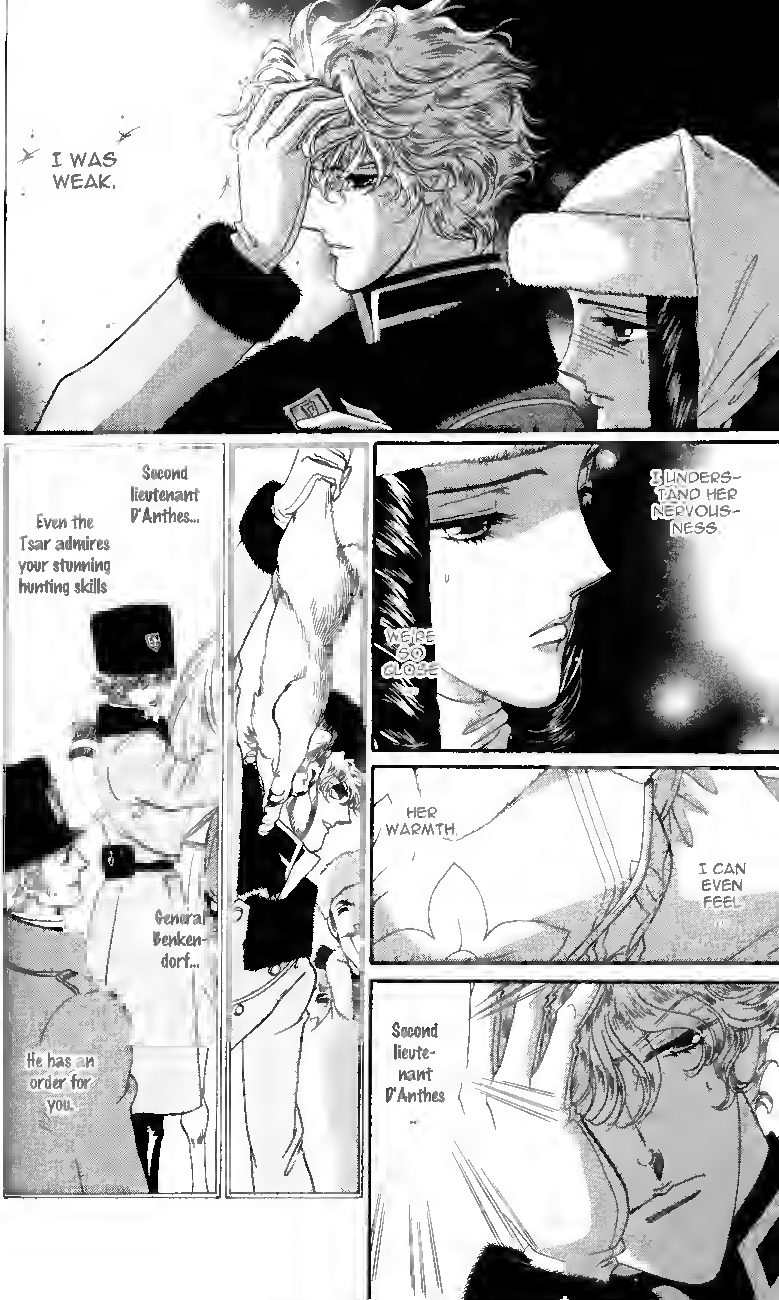
WHAT A STERN FACE...
BARON ...
YOU'RE MOVING TOO QUICKLY ...
EKATERINA ...
WON'T BE ABLE TO KEEP UP WITH US...

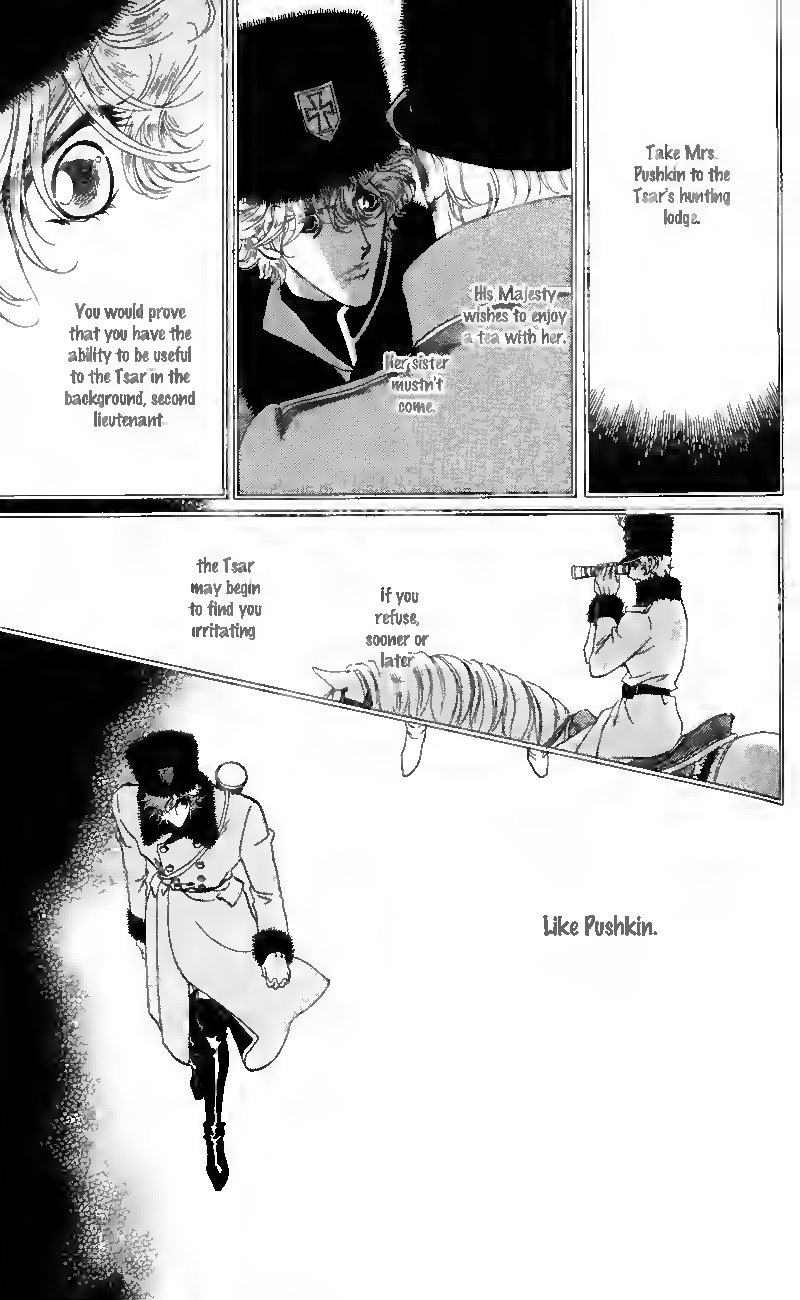
BUT...
DON'T WORRY!
IVANOV IS WITH HER.
HE'LL TAKE HER TO THE CASTLE
CLOP CLOP
THE RAIN IS BEGINNING TO FALL MORE HEAVILY. WE NEED TO LEAVE IMMEDIATELY.
I'LL WAIT HERE FOR MY SISTER.
I WON'T ALLOW IT!
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
ISN'T THIS...
WELL,
EKATERINA AND I ARE GOING TO THE SAME PLACE, AREN'T WE?
WHY DON'T WE WAIT HERE FOR A MOMENT?
...STRANGE?
LET'S GO.

I'M FRIGHTENED OF BEING SEPARATED FROM EVERYBODY...
COME ON
NO.
AND OF BEING ALONE WITH HIM.

EVEN IF WE WERE TO WAIT FOR YOUR SISTER HERE, SHE WOULDN'T COME
IVANOV WILL LEAD HER DOWN AN EASIER PATH. THEY'LL TAKE A DETOUR.
MISS EKATERINA HAS NOT YET HAD ENOUGH PRACTICE ON HORSEBACK
HE WON'T HARM ME
Nod
TRUST ME
COME ON, LEST WE BOTH CATCH COLDS
AM I THINKING TOO MUCH?

LET'S WAIT HERE FOR A WHILE
UNTIL THE RAIN IS GONE
IT S RAINING HEAVILY NOW
THE RAIN SHOULD LESSEN SLIGHTLY ONCE THAT CLOUD PASSES


I WAS WEAK.
Second lieutenant D'Anthes...
Even the Tsar admires your stunning hunting skills
General Benkendorf...
He has an order for you.
I UNDERSTAND HER NERVOUSNESS.
WE'RE SO CLOSE
HER WARMTH
I CAN EVEN FEEL IT.
Second lieutenant D'Anthes...


You would prove that you have the ability to be useful to the Tsar in the background, second lieutenant.
Her sister mustn't come.
His Majesty wishes to enjoy a tea with her.
Take Mrs. Pushkin to the Tsar's hunting lodge.
the Tsar may begin to find you irritating
If you refuse, sooner or later
Like Pushkin.

HOW UNREFI-NED!
BUT IT'S MORE THAN A SIMPLE TEA.
IF THEY'RE ALONE IN THE HUNTING LODGE...
DAMN NICHOLAS!
IS THAT HIS PLAN NOW?
TO HAVE TEA WITH THE MARRIED LADIES?
IN THE COURT, HIS INFATUA-TIONS ARE WELL-KNOWN

JUST AS IT WAS A YEAR AGO HER HUSBAND SN THERE TO PROTECT HER
IF THE TSAO WERE TO COURT HER, SHE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO REJECT HIM.
THE MOMENT OF TRUTH IS GROWING NEARER AND SHE KNOWS NOTHING OF IT.
AND SHE IS TERRIBLY NERVOUS.
NOW IT'S JUST THE TWO OF US.
WHY IS IT I WHO MUST TAKE HER TO THE LION'S DEN?!

!
WAIT A MOMENT
...
WE SHOULD BE GOING
Pon
WHAT?
I CAN'T MOVE
THE HORSES

HEY!
GET AWAY FROM EACH OTHER!
STOP THAT! THOSE POOR THINGS
NOW THAT THEY'VE FINALLY
Giggle
Hee Hee Hee
TO LAUGH, AT A TIME SUCH AS THIS...
...
HOW CHARMING.

I AM NOW THE ONLY MAN WHO CAN POSSIBLY PROTECT HER SMILE FROM NICHOLAS
ISN'T SHE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE TSAR'S FAVOUR?
WAIT A MOMENT DOESN'T IT...
DOESN'T IT SEEM AS THOUGH I WERE IN LOVE..
BARON D'ANTHES?

...WITH
NATALIA
NIKOLAEVNA?

THIS IS WHERE I'M TO STAY TONIGHT?

BARON D'ANTHES?
WHY DID YOU BRING ME HERE?
MY SISTER EKATERINA WILL STAY HERE TOO, WON'T SHE?

WHY DOES IT HAVE THE TSAR'S MARK ON IT?
IT'S THE TSAR'S HUNTING LODGE

BARON?
EXCUSE ME
THERE'S NO NEED TO WORRY
IT'S THE TSAR'S WISH THAT YOU REST HERE FOR THE TIME BEING
OH, SECOND LIEUTE-NANT
I APPRE-CIATE YOUR EFFORTS.
COME BACK TO YOUR SENSES, GEORGES D'ANTHES!
YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED THE DUTY THAT WAS ASKED OF YOU.

IT CAN'T BE...
!!
YOUR... YOUR MAJESTY...
WHY MUST SOMETHING LIKE THIS HAVE TO HAPPEN?
MRS. PUSHKIN,
I'VE BEEN AWAITING YOU IMPATIENTLY.
P... PLEASE
WHEN WE WERE DANCING THE QUADRILLE,
I TOLD YOU THAT I WISHED TO BE ALONE WITH YOU,
AND YOU AGREED..
BARON D'ANTHES BROUGHT ME HERE KNOWING IT ALL?

I BEG YOUR PARDON
HOLD IT THIS WAY
IF YOU SEPARATE YOUR HANDS, YOU'LL BURN THE TSAR
I DIDN'T HEAR IT
OVER THE MUSIC...
YOU
THAT TIME?
WHAT FAIR SKIN
YOU ARMS ARE SO SWANLIKE
I COULDN'T CAPTURE A BLACK WOLF...
YOU...
ARE THE ONE I CAPTURED INSTEAD

IS ABSOLUTE BY THE GRACE OF GOD
Clatter
AM I YOUR MAJESTY'S TROPHY?
MARRIAGE IS SACRED YOUR MAJESTY
RUSSIAN WOMEN REMAIN MARRIED TO THEIR HUSBANDS FOR LIFE
DON'T BE NERVOUS
THIS IS AN HONOR
MY POWER

THERE WAS A GUNSHOT NEARBY!
WHAT?
THERE'S A BLACK WOLF IN THAT DIRECTION!

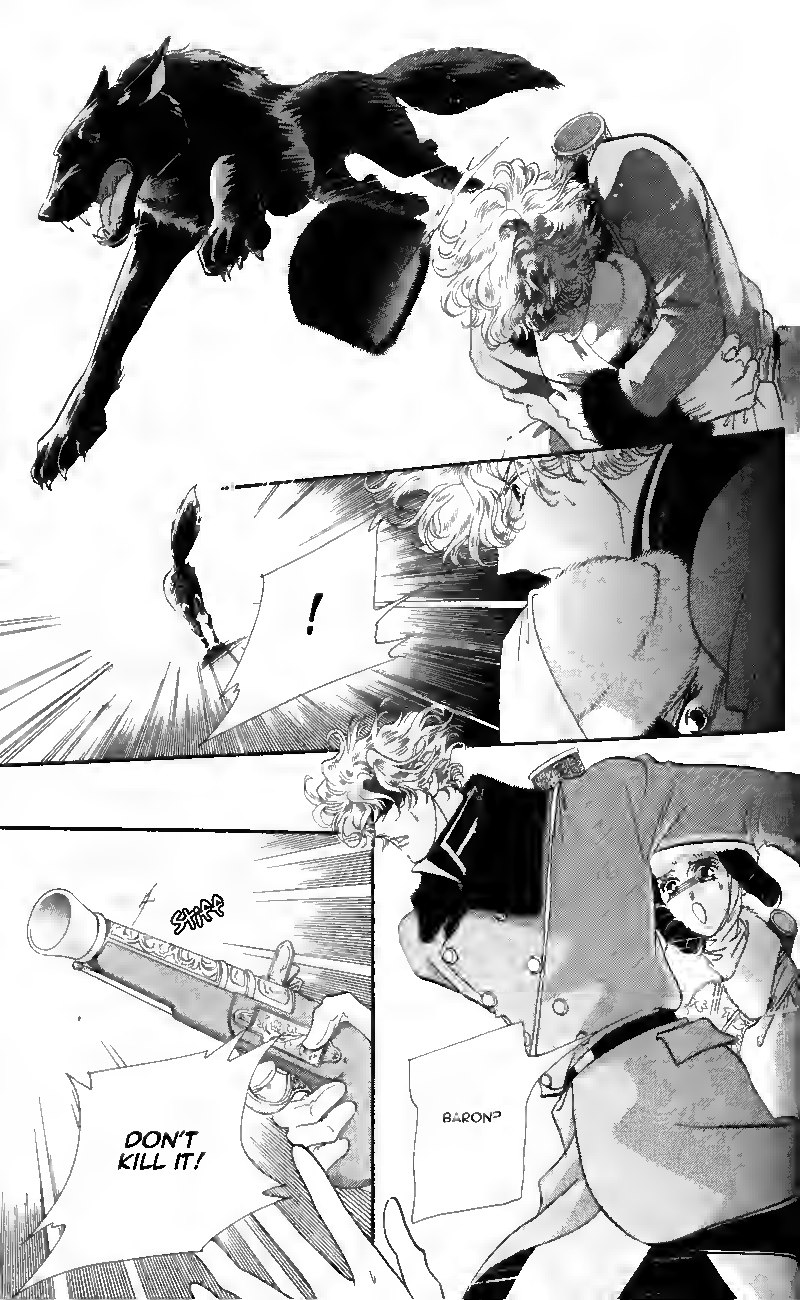
BLACK WOLVES!
YOUR MAJESTY, THERE ARE WOLVES NEARBY!
THE RAIN HAS BECOME A DRIZZLE!
LET'S RESUME THE HUNT.
WHERE DID YOU SEE THEM, SECOND LIEUTENANT D'ANTHES?
WHEN I LEFT THE MAIN BUILDING THROUGH THE WEST GATE, I SAW THEM LURKING AROUND THE HILL THICKETS.
MRS PUSHKIN, ARE YOU THERE?
NO, THE TSAR COULDN'T HAVE
HURT HER, COULD HE?
OH, I'M GLAD.
Push

DON'T TOUCH ME!
YOU'RE A HORRIBLE MAN!
I MIS-JUDGED YOU!
IF THE WOLF HADN'T APPEARED, WHAT WOULD HAVE BECOME OF ME?
HUSH, NOW.
IF WE ESCAPE WHILE HE'S OFF HUNTING, THERE WON'T BE ANY COMPLAINTS.
DON'T WORRY.
THE WOLF HUNT WON'T FINISH ANYTIME SOON.
IT WAS A LIE.

I DID IT TO RESCUE YOU!

HOW WHOLLY UNEXPECTED! I NEVER IMAGINED HEARING SOMETHING LIKE THIS FROM YOU!
Rustle
YOU'LL LOSE THEIR TRUST!
IF THEY CAN'T FIND IT AFTER ALL, SOMEONE IS SURE TO BECOME SUSPICIOUS OF YOU!
IF THEY REALISE THAT IT WAS A LIE
The wolf boy?
ARE YOU COMPLETELY SENSELESS?
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD THE STORY OF THE BOY WHO CRIED WOLF?

GRRR
!


!
BARON?
SHAA
DON'T KILL IT!

IT HAS BEEN CAPTURED BEFORE. IT'S A DANGEROUS WOLF
A FERO-CIOUS BEAST
AND
LET IT GO
LOOK. IT HAS CHIL-DREN
THAT'S NOT A SUFFICIENT REASON
IT PROVES THAT THERE TRULY WERE WOLVES NEARBY!
THIS IS FOR
OUR OWN SAKE!

Blah
Blah
Blah
Arg
Arg
A BLACK WOLF
IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME
YOU BROUGHT IT DOWN SECOND LIEUTENANT D'ANTHES
PLEASE GIVE IT THE FINISHING BLOW
IT WOULD THEN BE YOUR MAJESTY'S TROPHY
HMM

I'M NO LONGER CERTAIN
OR ARE YOU NOT?
ARE YOU A GOOD PERSON?
ドキッ
!

I CAN'T TAKE MY EYES OFF OF YOU